

Presidents TWENTY YEARS OF REFLECTION

(Editor's Note: The following comments from the Past Presidents of the Folk Dance Federation of California have been sent to me at my request in connection with the celebration of the "Twentieth Anniversary of the Folk Dance Federation of California, Inc.)

HENRY "BUZZ" GLASS, First President, 1942-43



I was bitten by the folk dance bug in 1937, and at that time danced with almost every known organization group, becoming a charter member of Changs. The idea of inviting groups to Lodi, on May 3, 1942, to present the idea of forming a Federation, was a natural outcome of the enjoyment of this activity and of wanting to find a way to bring groups and dancers together. Nine groups with 150 dancers responded with enthusiasm, and a further organizational meeting

quickly followed on May 16, in San Francisco, with the Fun Club as hosts, and on June 14, in Golden Gate Park, with Changs as hosts. With its three elected officers and the adoption of the by-laws in August, 1942 (consisting of one legal sheet), the Federation was well on its way, with festivals being held, dances taught, ideas presented, and new groups being formed. The end of the first year found us with 23 member groups and a balance in the treasury of \$3.00. The six purposes of the organization as set forth in Article II of the original by-laws still hold true today. About thirty dances were on the Lodi May 3, 1942 program, including the still popular Korobushka, Hambo, Tsiganotchka, and American Squares.

We will always be grateful that dancers belonging to groups organized before 1942 responded to this idea, and came in spite of the fact we were engaged in World War II, with tire and gasoline rationing and other problems.

ED KREMERS, Second President, 1943-44



By the time Buzz Glass turned the Presidency over to me it had already become apparent that the Federation needed a regular publication of some kind. The idea was developed during the summer and fall, and by the end of the year Clarice Dechent (now Wills), then Federation Secretary-Treasurer, and myself, turned out the first (January 1944 I believe it was) edition of what we called the "Federation Folkdancer" - a two-page mimeograph job. The name was later

changed to "Let's Dance", as the Hermans, in New York, called our attention to the fact that they were publishing, intermittently, a monthly magazine called the "Folk Dancer". During the spring I appointed Bret Van Kriedt.

a member of *Changs*, as Editor, to relieve the regular Federation officers of the task.

Lucile Czarnowski suggested that the Federation standardize dance patterns to avoid confusion at Festivals. Accordingly, I appointed her Chairman of a Research Committee to undertake this job. She gathered a group of people, including Clarice and myself, and began to write up and publish dances in loose-leaf mimeograph form. These were included with the monthly "paper" (as "Let's Dance" was called at that time). After about a year, the Council authorized Lucile's committee to prepare a bound book from the loose-leaf dances, plus such other general explanatory material as was deemed desirable. From this, Volume I, of *Folk Dances from Near and Far*, eventually made its appearance — but that gets into a later year!

MRS. WAYNE WILLS, Third President, 1944-45



When, as Clarice Dechent, I was installed as third President of the Federation, there were thirty-one member clubs, with an estimated membership of around 1500 people. Ken Wade, Ruby Biel, and Beatrice Jenkins were elected to serve with me as Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Lucile Czarnowski headed the Research Committee, Bret Van Kriedt Edited and Bea Cook Business-Managed the Federation "Folk Dancers." In mid-year the name of the publication was changed to "Let's Dance", as the

result of a name contest won by Gloria Nash. With the new name came Ruby Biel, as Editor, and Clyde Evans, as Business Manager. Festivals and club meetings during war time were marked by shortage of men, but the Federation made some contributions to the moral of service men through U.S.O. Festivals and encouraging service men to attend all of their activities, including the monthly Federation Festivals.

Highlights of the year included sending Madelyne Greene as our representative to the National Folk Festival in Philadelphia; a performance of folk dances presented as a part of the Midsummer Festival at Sigmund Stern Grove in San Francisco, a second Woodminster program presented under the direction of Ed Kremers. Walter Grothe served as chairman for an "experiment" presenting three programs at the San Francisco Museum of Art. Berkeley Folk Dancers, *Changs* and the Festival Workshop each presented one evening of dances. Frost Amphitheatre at Stanford served as setting for the final festive of the year, to which delegates of the brand new United Nations Organization were invited as special guests.

LUCILE CZARNOWSKI, Fourth President, 1945-46



Congratulations to our Folk Dance Federation on its Twentieth Anniversary, and to our Editor, Vi Dexheimer, for assembling the highlights of Federation accomplishments during this period of time.

This was a year of beginnings and growth. We expanded into a Federation of Folk Dance Clubs representing all sections of California. A date to remember is March 10, 1946, when a Southern Section of Clubs became incorporated into the Folk Dance Federation of California, with subsequent

revision of the by-laws to meet these growing needs. A heart-warming celebration to mark this event was the FIRST STATEWIDE FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL, held at Ojai, May 11, 1946. David Young, director of the Folk Dance Group at Ojai, was the Festival Director and prime organizer of this event. We danced in the portion of the main city street in front of the central plaza. The fire department had hosed down the street and prepared it for dancing. It was a happy occasion.

This was the year for the initial publication of Volume I, Folk Dances from Near and Far, by the Research Committee, Volume II was nearing completion with the publication date set for July 1946. "Let's Dance" developed from a loose-leaf monthly to a printed publication with policies allowing for future expansion. Monthly festivals grew in size, beauty and fun to the point where on one occasion an estimated number of a thousand dancers in costume were participating, with approximately eight thousand spectators in the gallery. A strong effort was made to develop "live music" for festival dancing with the resultant appearance of folk dance orchestras. Two Folk Dance Teaching Institutes were held under the direction of the University of California Extension Division.

The outward growth and expansion of the Federation was accompanied by an inner growth of mutual cooperation and understanding between clubs throughout the State of California, promoting a spirit of friendship and appreciation of our rich cultural heritage.

WALTER GROTHE, Fifth President, 1946 - 48



The years of my two terms as the President of the Folk Dance Federation of California were the years of pioneering, the years of growth, upsurge and enthusiasm. We were small but we all stood together and moved in the same direction. Highlights during these two years, and particularly during my years as Vice President under Lucile Czarnowski were many, such as the starting of the Teachers'

Institutes the creation of the College of the Pacific Folk Dance Camp, the starting of the Annual Statewide Festivals, the Formation of the Southern Federation, etc. But if I may choose one event as a highlight, an event that has never been duplicated, it has to do with our pioneering spirit and the forming of the (at the time we called it) Southern Section. The South, with our assistance, had just been organized when one of their leaders, a great enthusiast and go-getter, Morry Gelman, was moving from Los Angeles to Oxnard. There was no folk dancing there, so something had to be done. He discussed the matter with me and he approached the City Government, proposing to them to stage a folk dance Festival in the City Park in order to create interest in the movement, and the starting of a group in Oxnard. After some persuasion the City appropriated \$500. With that money we chartered an old Army parachute plane, and Morry asked me to squeeze in as many exhibition groups as I could and come down and exhibit at the Festival. By choosing groups where several members belonged to more than one group,

I was able to squeeze 3 groups into the plane; Berkeley Folk Dancers, Madelynne Greene's Festival Workshop, and the Palomanians. We met at the San Francisco International Airport in the morning in full costume. There was no room for baggage, so in full regalia we flew down in this old crate, which had only long benches the full length of the plane. A few hours later we landed in Oxnard. The airport was almost adjacent to the park, and we were greeted by the folk dancers and officials as we descended. We participated in the festival and put on 3 exhibitions. In the evening we were royally treated for dinner and more dancing in one of the city's night clubs. In the meantime fog had come in and the airport closed down. Therefore, in a treacherous bus trip through dense fog we were taken to an interior airport, where the plane was waiting for us. We got home early in the morning, tired but happy. The following week Oxnard had a flourishing folk dance group

LARRY GETCHELL, Sixth President, 1948-49



These were years of rapid growth in folk dancing, not alone in California but in States like Washington, Oregon, Minnesota and others. It seemed nothing could stop us. Our major problem was overcrowded festivals and dance floors. And how could we ever find time to attend a Regional or Federation Festival each Sunday. In round figures, Federation membership exploded from 200 to 400 members. The Federation treasury became a problem, too much money. Our 1949

Centennial Festival, at the San Francisco Auditorium, from a participant and spectator standpoint, was the largest single attraction during the San Francisco Centennial Celebration. We actually turned spectators away.

There were a few problems, too. The entertainment interests became concerned and tried through legislation in Sacramento to curtail our movement. Folk Dance members throughout the State flooded the Assembly with wires and letters in such quantities that we had little difficulty in getting the bill tabled when we attended the hearing in Sacramento.

We had come a long way in the six or seven years since the Federation was organized and many of us, who were active in the movement then, still have our costumes pressed and ready to wear in the year 1962.

DANNY MC DONALD, Seventh President, 1949-50



(See Editor's Note at end of article.)



GEORGE MURTON, Eighth President, 1950 - 51



1950 was a wonderful year for Adrienne and me and it would be very hard to put into words what all the years of folk dancing and the true friends we made during those years have meant to us. I mentioned 1950, especially for that was the year that the Presidency of the Folk Dance Federation of California filled all our waking moments from the time of the beautiful festival in Monterey, until the festival the next May in Oakland. We especially remember the fine people we worked

with. We wish that we could name them all, but to name a few would mean leaving out the many who worked to further the movement for the benefit of all. So, we'll just say "thanks" for all the help you gave us to make it such a memorable year.

Some of the highlights of that year were the beautiful performances at Woodminster and all the colorful festivals. We can remember attending as many as three on some Sundays. The two marvelous weeks at COP Folk Dance Camp, where there was nothing on one's mind but folk dancing and related subjects. Interesting people from other lands, our darling Una Kennedy (now O Farrell) from Ireland. And that Pixie, Carlos Rosas from Mexico. The wonderful Austrian Goodwill tour and their performance at the San Francisco Opera House. These are but a few of the wonderful memories of that year. Thank you all for the privilege of being a part of your magnificent movement.

BILL CASTNER, Ninth President, 1951 - 52



(See Editor's Note at end of article)

LEONARD MURPHY, Tenth President, 1952 - 54



1952 to 1954 in the Federation brought forth many new workers, new talent, new faces, which were sorely needed in order that the Federation should move forward. The organization was in sore financial straits, and through the stimulation of new ideas and fine cooperation of new officers and workers, the first volume of the Basic "Let's Dance" Volumes was presented to the thousands of dancers throughout the State and nationwide. The ABC basic volumes contributed greatly to the

financial picture and started thousands of new dancers in the folk dance movement. I feel that during my two years as President, many future potential leaders for the Federation were developed, first and foremost among them, William F (Bill) Sorensen, who served as my Vice President and

succeeded me as President. It was the combined efforts of this person, together with the many other dedicated persons, that stimulated the growth of the Federation and contributed to our accomplishments and the success of our efforts.

WILLIAM SORENSEN, Eleventh President, 1954-55



Best wishes to the Federation on this Twentieth Birthday, It has been just seven years since I stepped out of the office of President. 1954-55 was a success because of the untiring efforts put into the Federation's growth by my predecessors. I am particularly happy that I followed Leonard Murphy, because we continued to improve the financial picture of the Federation. The year saw "Let's Dance" come out of the red; we sold 'beaucoup' dance volumes; we had scads of fun and in the end I think we promoted good sound working relations among so many wonderful people who supported the Federation.

My year afforded me the opportunity to meet some fine and wholesome folk dancers throughout California. To try to give proper credit to any one person would be easy but unfair. One of my greatest pleasures was the honor of introducing Governor and Mrs. Knight to the thousands of folk dancers that filled the auditorium at the Tenth Annual Statewide Festival in Sacramento, which was also the 13th Anniversary of the Federation.

BEV WILDER, Twelfth President, 1955-56



It might be noted that there were some things that occurred during my term that have established themselves as Federation traditions.

1 - The Woodminster performance was placed on a paying basis instead of "free". 2 - One monthly Festival was converted by Council action to a fund-raising dance. This became titled the "Treasurer's Ball". 3 - With the cooperation and assistance of Frank Kane, my Vice President, the FDFC office was moved to its present location.

4 - An effort was made by the Executive Board and the FDFC Council to promote harmony between all of the folk dancing groups, both within and outside of the Federation. 5 - A Festival Advisory Coordinator was appointed to assist in gathering data for use at festivals to make them of greater interest to the beginner and intermediate-level dancers. This Coordinator developed a list of dances generally danced by folk dance groups both in the Clubs and at Festivals. The list was made available to all activities desiring it. As a result of the first three items the Federation was put on the paying basis that it has maintained ever since.

Although five items have been listed, I do not wish to imply that they were the sole result of my Executive Board. Several of them came to pass in my term of office, although the initial stimulation came during Bill Sorensen's terms. I was most fortunate in having several Executive Board members who had been very active in Federation top circles during the prior year. Above all, I must not forget Ginny, whose guidance throughout my term of office was extremely helpful!

FRANK KANE, Thirteenth President, 1956 - 57



(See Editor's Note at end of article.)

DON SPIER, Fourteenth President, 1957 - 58



The highlights of my term of office were the appointing of Vi Dexheimer as Editor of "Let's Dance" magazine (and this is her fifth year as Editor), hosting the Statewide Festival in San Francisco, with great team effort under the direction of General Chairman Carlos Ruling; Federation Kolo Festival under the direction of John Skow, John Filcich and Mr. "J". It was during this year that the Moiseyev Dance Company made its first visit to the United States.

JOHN T. MOONEY, Fifteenth President, 1958 - 59



During my term I continued my preceding four-year effort as Treasurer to build up the Federation Treasury. The results of the *close to the vest* operation, the careful planning and personal work on the part of prior officers, started to show results during this term. The Teacher-Training Program for training teachers in folk dancing was instituted. The first program, held at Merced, was coordinated by Millie von Konsky, who really conceived the whole program. Plans for a second

program at Sacramento Junior College and other colleges soon followed. During this term it was decided to change the name of the dance volumes to "Dances from Near and Far - International Folk Dance Series". Volumes were graded "A" for Beginner Dances, "B" for Intermediate Dances and "C" for Advanced Dances. The graded volumes are now definitely of more value to teachers and students.

A well known television personality became so enthused with our folk dancing that he tried to promote the filming of Festivals to be televised nation-wide on a local basis. However, too many technical obstacles were met, which eventually doomed the feasibility of the program. This was regrettable, for all could see the tremendous impetus folk dancing would have received throughout the country had the program been able to get on the air.

On retiring in favor of Millie von Konsky, I presented the Federation with a silver-banded "Presiding President's Gavel", and this gavel is now passed on to each President.

MILLIE VON KONSKY, Sixteenth President, 1959-60



the folk dance movement.

As to committee chairmen, outstanding contributions were made by the following people: George Kieslich, a prodigious worker and business manager of "Let's Dance" established an *in the black* record after four years *in the red* status. Who but past Vice President and Editor Vi Dexheimer could handle the editorial responsibilities of "Let's Dance"? May we always enjoy the talents of this truly devoted person. Dr. Arthur Emmes and his committee made numerous revisions in the by-laws. Among the most significant was the establishing of controls in balloting and elections, thereby ridding our organization of the dangers of fraud. Having established the Teacher Training Program which was co-sponsored by a state college the previous year, I was proud to have the past president Bev Wilder pick up the reins and carry on a successful co-sponsorship with Sacramento State College. Later the same year the program was presented in the Lodi-Stockton area under the equally capable leadership and coordination of Bee Mitchell. Past President Frank Kane who has brought prestige to our folk dance family as an officer and artist did the artwork and planning of another *first* - a Christmas card project which was both artistically and financially a success. My Woodminster coordinator, Bee Drescher, presented a professional show in every detail, including for the first time a specially printed and prepared souvenir program. Hubby Ernest, showed his executive ability by coordinating the ticket sales, thus producing a sizeable profit. Having originally promoted and established the Junior Scholarship Fund, I watched its growth and progress with enthusiasm under the chairmanship of Mary Spring. In conclusion, every successful officer or leader has enjoyed the talents, counselling and devotion of an unsung hero - mine has been my secretary, Gwen Heisler, who has performed in this capacity for almost as many years as the Federation has celebrated anniversaries.

I wish to publicly express my gratitude to my officers, special chairmen and committees for their contributions and participation in making the years 1959-60 an integral part of Federation history.

LAWRENCE JERUE, Seventeenth President, 1960-61



During my term of office I strived to continue the good relationship between the Executive Board and the Council members, as well as the folk dancers, that had been established during Millie von Kinsky's term of office. Without the cooperation of the members of the Board and the many friends I have made during my folk dancing

activity, the year could not have been so successful.

ROBERT CHEVALIER, Eighteenth President, 1961-62



This last year I felt, if I did nothing else, I brought new people into the Committee structure of our organization. This is a transition period, a break-away from the old to the new. By bringing new personnel into the Committees we keep our Federation going ahead with new ideas and possible officer material in the future. I changed the Minutes set-up so as to show who attends the meetings, trying to keep the meetings on a strict agenda, yet everyone had a chance to be heard. The meetings as a rule were short and to the point, yet much business was conducted. I made it a rule in my appointments not to double-up. If a person held a Council job of importance, he was not asked to serve on a Committee. I revived the Festival Advisory Committee and set up a Costume Research Committee.

(Editor's Note: A few of the Presidents and their reflections are missing from this article, but we all know that all have their memories about their term of office as President, and we have all benefited by their efforts and guidance in promoting the Folk Dancing Activity.)



FOLK DANCE FEDERATION OF CALIFORNIA, SOUTH, INC. PAST PRESIDENTS

ALLEN PELTON, President, 1946-47

Folk Dancing in Southern California has generally been a younger, smaller brother to our older brother up North. In fact, it was not until 1946 that we got around to considering organizing into a Federation, sparked in a large measure by the Westwood Cooperative Folk Dancers. Our first year, then, was principally the agony of organization, writing the constitution and by-laws, establishing working funds, and learning to know each other and to work together. The big inspiration proved to be our Festivals, our very first held in February of 1946, even before our Federation was fully organized. Our first directory of that same year listed a proud 42 groups.

Turning back through scraps of those early days brought quite a shock — they are already yellowed with age (and I'm getting well wrinkled myself, after 26 years of continuous dancing). But from these efforts began our Southern Section and proud are the many of us who gave it birth, and have nurtured it for these exciting 16 years.

H. "BILL" HERLOW, President, 1951-52

I surely would like to mention names - many names, of dancers and groups that helped me then, but - that would mean hundreds of them; for almost everyone helped in small and big ways. To name some and omit others would not be right, not only local dancers and Southern California Dancers, but Northern as well, who helped me during my term, and also for help and valuable information during the Statewide Festival we had here in Santa Barbara, for which I was honored to be the Chairman. From the bottom of my heart . . . "Thank you - one and all"!!

HARVARD HICKS, President, 1953-54

Ours was a year spent, not on developing big items, but in solving the many little problems, setting up the Federation operations on a more business like basis, conducting our meetings more efficiently, so we could have more time to dance (we only ran over once - what President can do that?), launching Idyllwild for those who could not attend Stockton, and frankly, just plain enjoying all the wonderful people who shared our interest in dancing.

As I searched back in my memory for highlights, I constantly became sidetracked by memories of people: Federation officers who did their jobs cheerfully and efficiently, and sometimes did mine as well; Club Directors and officers who willingly changed their plans whenever the Federation could be strengthened thereby, and of course, the multitude of members who quietly "put their shoulder to the wheel" whenever required.

MINNIE ANSTINE, President, 1954-56

With the help of the North, and Bill Sorensen, we reorganized our Research-Standardization and Institute Committees. These committees could not have become successful without the efforts of Marian Wilson, Ralph Miller, Edith Stevenson. The policies are still in effect.

Our Treasury was very low. Through the efforts of Edith Stevenson and Helen Kennedy the South held its first Treasurer's Ball. This made our Treasury solvent.

Our Idyllwild Folk Dance Camp, which was, and still is held in the beautiful mountains, West of the San Jacinto Mountains, was large enough to accommodate only 60 persons; it was therefore necessary to investigate another location in the south. The late Frank Cole, made contacts with the University of California, Santa Barbara Extension, and brought the data and presented it to the council in Santa Monica. Because I was a resident in Santa Barbara, I chose to mail out ballots to the groups of the Federation, South, and let them decide whether or not we would support two camps. This was the only fair way to decide such a tremendous undertaking. End results we decided to support the two camps in Southern California area and they are both growing. The University of Southern California co-sponsors Idyllwild, and the University of California co-sponsors the Santa Barbara Folk Dance Camp.

Marian Wilson, Paul Pritchard, Lani Papidol, Gordon Engler and Helen Yost, along with Frank Cole and Elizabeth Sanders and Dorothy Patchett Ley of Santa Barbara, worked very hard to help me organize this most important venture for the South, with Valerie Staigh as Chairman. Valerie

and Marian have been a tremendous asset, and I shall be forever grateful to all who helped me with this, my baby, which I have such a warm spot for in my heart. After Valerie was elected President, Isabelle Persh took over as chairman.

Last but not least, was the wishes of the South to stage a Pageant, so they accepted an invitation from the City of Santa Barbara to hold a Pageant in conjunction with "Old Spanish Days Fiesta" a world reknown annual celebration. Twenty-nine groups participated.

PAUL PRITCHARD, President, 1956 - 57

Probably the most important highlight of my term was the beginning of the Santa Barbara Folk Dance Camp, which started in the fall of 1956, though the credit for that certainly belongs to the people from Santa Barbara, and especially, to my predecessor, Minnie Anstine, who started the ball rolling.

I remember we had the Yugoslav Folk Dance groups visiting our shores that year, and several of our groups went all out to support them and make them welcome.

The 1957 Statewide went to San Diego, where it was very successful, but, again, credit for the backbreaking work goes to Vyts and Vivian and their committee.

I might add, I had a doggone good and industrious group of fellow officers and committee people, all of whom helped the promotion of folk dancing and the Federation.

VALERIE STAIGH, President, 1958 - 1960

The accomplishments of any President are only as great as the officers back of him. The achievements in a term of office are not the President's alone. Also, sometime these achievements take some time for their growth and bear fruits later.

Probably the greatest achievement for the Folk Dance Federation, South, during my particular term of office, was the revising of the By-Laws and Standing Rules, and the Incorporation of the Folk Dance Federation, South.

My personal satisfaction was the starting of Council Meetings on time, and the increasing in number of delegates at these meetings. Representation at Council Meetings have continued to grow. Also, I'm grateful for the establishment of excellent cooperation and friendship between the North and South Federation, the feeling of good fellowship and oneness, working out mutual problems for the continuance and success of the two Federations.

Some of my personal efforts were the compilation and publishing of "Advantages of Belonging to the Federation" and the "Festival Advisory", which are still being used.

Long-range plans which culminated this month was the collecting of Teacher-Training material. Unique experiences were two Statewides in succession and the two Federation Folk Dance Camps.

My sincere congratulations to the Federation on the Twentieth Anniversary. May it continue to grow.

RALPH MILLER, President, 1960-62

Attendance at Council Meetings has been steady and in good numbers. The backing that the Clubs have given to the following projects has given us a boost.

We have had two very successful Treasurer's Balls. This in turn paves the way for extra activities. There will be for the first time a Treasurers' Training Seminar to be held in March. We hope that scholarship winners will continue their training by attending this.

The monthly festivals have been well attended and are well-planned in advance. The exhibitions are always good. Thanks to our Advisory Committee

The regular institutes have been a huge success and still keep growing. Congratulations to all institute members, past and present. *We have excellent support from our "LET'S DANCE" Magazine!!*

Thanks to Vi Dexheimer for a very fine Directory. The cooperative spirit shown by combining North and South Directories has added a great deal to the value thereof.

I wish to congratulate the various committees for their excellent work, which has added to the success of our organization. It has been a pleasure to serve the Federation and thanks to all for the help extended to me.

(Editor's Note: Again, we regret that a few of the Presidents and their reflections are missing from this article, but we are sure they have their memories concerning their term of office as President, and all Folk Dancers have benefited by their efforts and spirit in promoting the Folk Dance Movement.)

